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ABSTRACT

Providing one-to-one tutoring, five days per week, 30 minutes a day, by specially trained teachers, Reading Recovery is an early intervention program designed to assist children in first grade who are having difficulty learning to read and write. A program overview gives background information on different facets of the program. Illustrating the research results and the Reading Recovery lesson, it also discusses program implications. A section is devoted to comments from parents, teachers, and administrators who were a part of the program. (Contains 30 references; a list of 3 regional training sites for teacher leaders; and a list of 76 training sites for teachers.) (SC)

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READING RECOVERY IN CALIFORNIA

1991-96

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READING
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Table of Contents

<i>Program Overview</i>	5
<i>Research Results</i>	11
<i>The Reading Recovery Lesson</i>	19
<i>Program Implementation</i>	23
<i>What California Program Participants Say</i>	29
<i>Regional Training Centers</i>	30
<i>Training Sites for Teachers</i>	31
<i>Affiliated Training Site</i>	34
<i>References</i>	35

*Being able to see children's faces when they realize they
can read is the only explanation needed to understand
our dedication to this task.*



*Kathy O'Brien
1951-1992*

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Program Overview

Introduction

Reading Recovery is an early intervention program designed to assist children in first grade who are having difficulty learning to read and write. Children eligible for the program are identified by their classroom teachers as the lowest in their class in reading acquisition. Children who are not taking on reading and writing through regular instruction receive a supplementary, short-term, individually designed program of instruction that allows them to succeed before they enter a cycle of failure. Reading Recovery is designed to move children in a short time from the bottom of their class to the average, where they can profit from regular classroom instruction. The goal of Reading Recovery is accelerated learning. Children are expected to make faster than average progress so that they can catch up with other children in their class.

Reading Recovery provides one-to-one tutoring, five days per week, 30 minutes a day, by a specially trained teacher. The daily lessons during these 30 minute sessions consist of a variety of reading and writing experiences that are designed to help children develop their own effective strategies for literacy acquisition. Instruction continues until children can read at or above the class average and can continue to learn without later remedial help. Reading Recovery is supplemental to classroom instruction and lasts an average of 12-20 weeks, at the end of which children have developed a self-extending system that uses a variety of strategies to read increasingly difficult text and to independently write their own messages.

The professional development of teachers is an integral part of Reading Recovery. The training is an intense, yearlong graduate course for teachers consisting of weekly classes affiliated with a university-based Regional Training Center. As the teachers learn how to implement the program, they work simultaneously with children in their home schools. The professional level of the preparation has empowered these experienced teachers to make changes in their own teaching and to systemically impact the teaching in their schools.

Program History

Reading Recovery was developed by Marie M. Clay who conducted observational research in the 1960s that enabled her to design techniques for detecting early reading and writing difficulties of children. In the 1970s, she developed Reading Recovery procedures with teachers and tested the program in New Zealand (Clay, 1979). The highly positive results of this pilot program led to the nationwide adoption of Reading Recovery in New Zealand in the early 1980s.

In California alone, more than 400 school districts served approximately 18,500 children.

The success of the program resulted in program initiatives over the next decade in Australia and Ohio (1984), Canada (1988), and California and Great Britain (1991). In 1994-95, Reading Recovery sites operated in six Canadian provinces, 49 U.S. States, and the District of Columbia. Approximately 100,000 North

American children were served by Reading Recovery educators during the 1995-96 school year. *In California alone, more than 400 school districts served approximately 18,500 children.*

Reading Recovery is approved by the National Diffusion Network (NDN) of the U.S. Department of Education as a developer/demonstrator project. This NDN designation is a recognition of proven program effectiveness.

Reading Recovery in California

In 1990-91, the California Department of Education held a series of meetings throughout the state to encourage networking of teachers, administrators, and university faculty interested in early intervention approaches. This interest was encouraged by Categorical Programs Office Director Hanna Walker, and staff Dennis Parker and Beth Breneman, who were interested in exploring early literacy programs for the at-risk population in California schools. At the same time, efforts to establish a statewide training site for Reading Recovery were underway at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), under the direction of the late Kathy O'Brien, Coordinator of the Reading Program; Adria F. Klein, Chair of the Elementary/Bilingual Education Department; and Stanley L. Swartz, Chair of the Department of Advanced Studies in Education. The CSUSB School of Education, in collaboration with Office of Extended Education and San Bernardino and Riverside County Offices of Education initiated teacher training during 1991-92 by employing Ohio Reading Recovery teacher leader, Rebecca Shook.

Reading Recovery has grown rapidly in California (Table 1). Beginning with four teacher

classes in 1991, the project has grown to include 101 teacher leaders and 2485 teachers in 1995-96. Additional recognition of the importance of Reading Recovery to California came in 1995, when Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin allocated funds to support teacher leader training.

West Coast Annual Reading Recovery and Descubriendo La Lectura Institute

Among its many professional development activities, Reading Recovery in California is the primary sponsor of the West Coast Reading Recovery and Descubriendo La Lectura Institute. This annual Institute draws teachers, administrators, and Reading Recovery personnel from throughout California, almost every other state, and four foreign countries to an important

Table 1. *Reading Recovery in California*

	<i>Teacher Leaders</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Children Served</i>
1991-92	4	75	566
1992-93	19	330	2,027
1993-94	39	873	5,235
1994-95	71	1,677	13,416
1995-96	101	2,485	18,486
1996-97	121	3,937	31,496*

**Projected*

training opportunity for literacy educators. Attendance exceeded 3000 in 1996. The Institute will be held in Sacramento in 1998 (February 26 through March 1 at the Sacramento Convention Center) and rotates between Northern and Southern conference sites each year thereafter.

Reading Recovery Council of North America

California has participated in the development of the Reading Recovery Council of North America (RRCNA). The initiation of this professional organization is considered a milestone in the development of Reading Recovery. California has the largest membership in the organization and is represented by William D. Lynch of San Diego, and Connie Scott Williams of Long Beach, as members of the Executive Board. In order to disseminate research and program results, in 1994, the Council began publishing an international journal focusing on early literacy. The journal, *Literacy, Teaching and Learning: An International Journal of Early Literacy*, is edited by Adria F. Klein and Stanley L. Swartz.

A new book, *Research in Reading Recovery*, (Swartz & Klein, 1997) contains original Reading Recovery research from the journal. The book was published by Heinemann Publishing, Inc. The royalties from this book have been dedicated to the support of the Reading Recovery Council of North America.

Descubriendo La Lectura

California State University, San Bernardino, began the implementation of a statewide dissemination plan for Reading Recovery in Spanish during 1993-94. Descubriendo La Lectura (DLL), an application of Reading

Recovery in Spanish (Escamilla & Andrade, 1992), was constructed for Spanish-speaking students because eventual success in learning to read in English is directly related to successful learning opportunities in native-language literacy. This Center at CSUSB has played a leadership role in Descubriendo La Lectura/ Reading Recovery in Spanish and has made a significant impact on the development of the program and its accessibility. In 1995-96, 87 teachers and 16 teacher leaders served 1248 children in DLL (There are currently 17 DLL teacher leaders and 296 teachers serving approximately 2400 children.)

Reading Recovery in Spanish was established statewide in 1994.

Program for Children

Reading Recovery gives children a chance to succeed before they enter a cycle of failure. Children are selected for the program based on authentic measures of assessment and teacher judgment. The lowest achieving children in first grade, without exception, are selected to receive the program. Their regular classroom instruction is then supplemented with daily, one-to-one lessons.

The lessons consist of a variety of reading and writing experiences designed to help children develop effective strategies for literacy acquisition. Instruction continues until the child can read at or above the class average and can continue to learn without later remedial help.

A high percentage of the children in California who have completed a Reading Recovery program have become independent readers. Data from California are consistent with numerous other studies which have shown that Reading Recovery helps a large majority of low-progress readers achieve continued reading success. Even children who do not discontinue from the program show significant growth in their reading and writing abilities.

Program for Educators

The remarkable progress that children make in Reading Recovery demonstrates that reading failure is not a foregone conclusion for at-risk students. The key to success for such children is specialized teaching that will enable them to improve quickly—before they are labeled as failures—without disrupting their regular classroom curriculum.

In Reading Recovery, the teacher training begins with a yearlong curriculum that integrates theory and practice and is characterized by intensive interaction with colleagues. Following the training year, teachers continue to develop professionally through ongoing contact with their colleagues and instructors. Teachers-in-training teach children while being observed by their colleagues and get feedback on their practice. They reflect on their teaching in the light of literacy theory and peer critique over an extended period of time. Reading Recovery teachers-in-training become literacy experts with highly developed observational skills and a repertoire of intervention strategies that can be tailored to meet the individual needs of students.

Reading Recovery as a System Intervention

As the scope of the instructional program suggests, Reading Recovery is not a teaching

methodology that can be packaged and delivered through a set of materials, a workshop, or a series of courses. Reading Recovery is even more than a program for children and educators. It is a program for school systems that want to impact the educational opportunities for at-risk students. The collaboration of the school and the university promotes change within the system to impact instruction for all children.

The program is adopted by an entire school district or consortia of school districts that have made a long-term commitment to early literacy intervention. These Reading Recovery sites send an experienced classroom teacher to one of three California Regional Training Centers. Following the training year, these specially prepared teacher leaders return to their home districts and work full-time teaching children, training teachers in Reading Recovery, and performing other duties related to the operation of a site.

***Children . . . continue to learn
without later remedial help.***

The benefits of incorporating Reading Recovery extend well beyond the success of individual students who complete the program. The results achieved by the teachers and children involved in Reading Recovery demonstrate for the entire district the impact powerful teaching can have on low-progress children. Through interaction with Reading Recovery teachers, classroom teachers often begin to construct new theories about how children learn—theories that tend to carry over into classroom instruction.

Districts that have adopted Reading Recovery have the additional benefit of lower costs for special services. Reading Recovery has been

shown to reduce the rate of retention, special education placements, and remediation beyond first grade. And no time is lost delivering the services that will effect these changes. Teachers undergo training outside of regular school hours and they actually begin working with students as soon as the training begins.

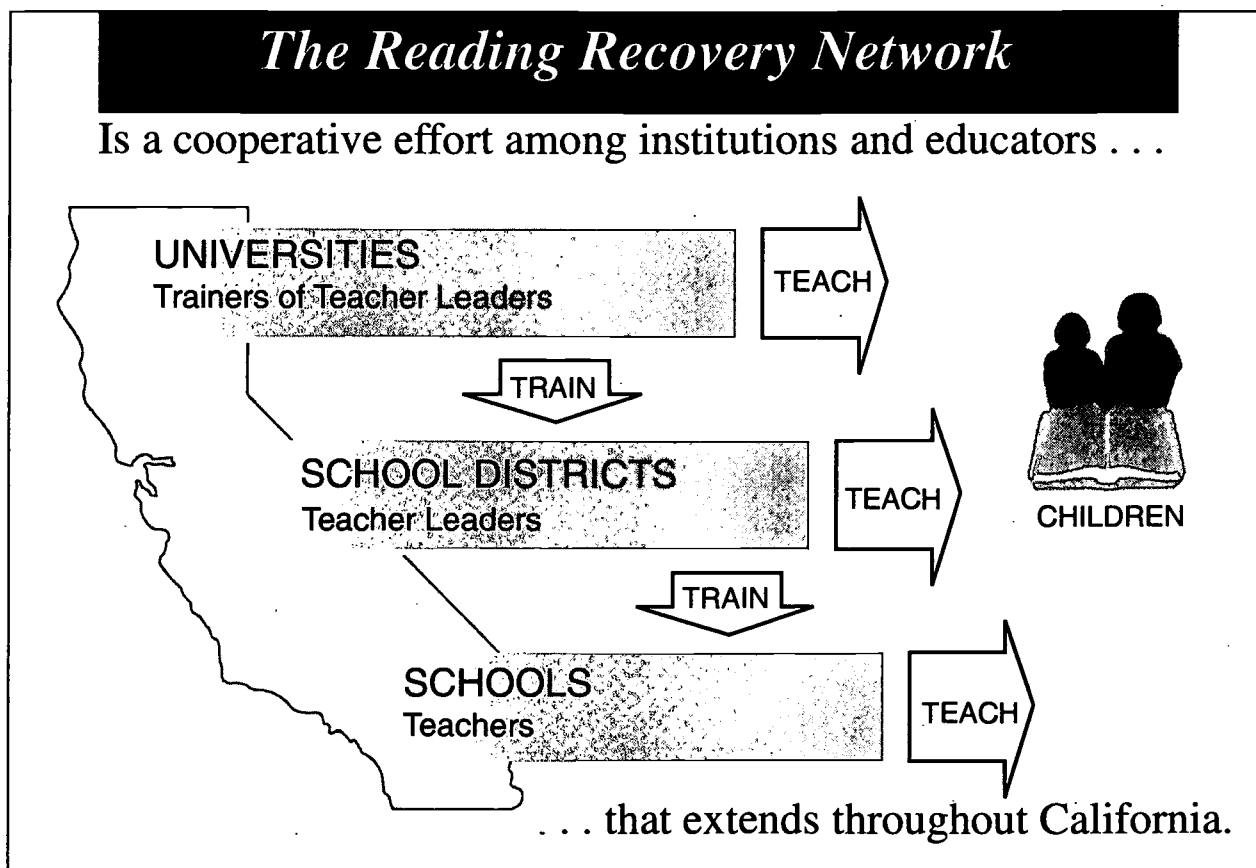
Reading Recovery as a Network of Educators and Institutions

Institutions and educators that have adopted Reading Recovery become part of an extensive network to support early literacy. In 1995-96, the Reading Recovery in California network included 426 school districts. The staffs of these institutions include more than 4073 educators,

including 3937 Reading Recovery teachers, 121 teacher leaders, and 15 university faculty, including six trainers. These individuals and institutions work together to preserve the integrity of Reading Recovery and improve its effectiveness as an early intervention program in California.

California Developments

The implementation of Reading Recovery in California has presented some unique problems and opportunities. Reading Recovery personnel from throughout the state are actively involved in finding solutions to the early literacy and learning challenges that affect the future success of children.



- Training models have been implemented to accommodate the various schedules used by year-round schools.
- Continued discussions are in progress regarding the number of available instructional days and the impact on program results. Some California schools have reported as low as 145 student days.
- New research questions and data sets were developed for use in California. This activity focused on a variety of unique California needs, including the high number of English language learners.
- The University Center for Developmental Disabilities at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB), has funded a research project to examine the use of Reading Recovery with children with autism. This study was initiated in Fall, 1996, and includes the involvement of teacher leaders in the 1996-97 CSUSB class. Dr. Swartz is the principal investigator.
- Reading Recovery in California personnel have developed numerous little books that better reflect the diverse cultures of California and carry a variety of more traditional American themes. These books are also translated into Spanish to support the Descubriendo La Lectura training.
- As part of its commitment to the Western region of the United States, Reading Recovery in California continues its support of the development of a training site in Texas. This assistance has helped disseminate the project in rural areas and schools that are difficult to access.
- California continues to play a leadership role in the dissemination of Descubriendo La Lectura / Reading Recovery in Spanish.
- Continued progress has been made for the implementation of Reading Recovery in Mexico. CSUSB, in collaboration with the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California and Universidad

Nacional Autónoma de Mexico, initiated both the training of three DLL teacher leaders and the development of training sites in Mexico. A major Mexican national conference on early literacy is scheduled for 1997, co-sponsored by Reading Recovery in California.

- Reading Recovery in California is supporting statewide implementation of California Early Literacy Learning (CELL), an early literacy project that is designed to provide access to good first teaching for all children. The project is a collaboration of school district and university faculty with a major focus on providing long-term professional development to effect systemic change in how we provide children's first school experiences. California Early Literacy Learning is designed to use the powerful strategies of Reading Recovery and other research-based teaching methodologies with all children in the primary grades. Rebecca Shook is the CELL Trainer and statewide Coordinator. More than 30 school districts are participating in 1996-97.
- Advanced Teacher Training Institutes are scheduled in Northern and Southern California. The 1997 Institutes will be in San Francisco, June 22-25, and in San Diego, June 29-July 2).
- William D. Lynch and Drs. Adria F. Klein and Stanley L. Swartz represented Reading Recovery on the California Reading Task Force. Swartz was the final editor of the task force report, *Every Child a Reader* (1995). Klein was the major researcher for the subsequent California Department of Education program advisory, *Teaching Reading* (1996).

Research Results

The success of Reading Recovery has been carefully documented since its inception. Pilot studies in New Zealand and the United States demonstrated that the program provides children in the lowest 20 percent of their class with the strategies necessary to read at or above grade level in an average of 12-20 weeks. Follow-up studies in both countries further showed that Reading Recovery children continue to read at an average level or better after receiving the intervention, reducing the need for long-term remediation.

How do students who complete the Reading Recovery program compare to their peers at the end of first grade?

In a California study (Swartz, Shook, & Hoffman, 1993), of the 1334 children who received full programs, 1037 were discontinued as successful readers. All children who completed the program were shown to have made

accelerated progress. Eighty-nine percent were at or above average levels in writing vocabulary, 95 percent on dictation, and 89 percent in reading, indicating that this group of children made quick gains and caught up with their peers. The total performance on each exceeded the average band of a group of randomly selected children not in the program. This comparison provides a very rigorous test for Reading Recovery children because the average band was drawn from the middle and upper level achievement groups.

Table 2 displays beginning and end-of-year scores (1995-96) for the children in the Reading Recovery and Descubriendo La Lectura (DLL)/Reading Recovery in Spanish programs. Of the children who received full programs, 5377 (76 percent) were discontinued as successful readers (Swartz, et al., 1996). Growth rates are shown for Reading Recovery and Descubriendo

Table 2. Summary of Diagnostic Scores for Children Completing the Reading Recovery and Descubriendo La Lectura Programs

Measure	Term of Testing	Reading Recovery		Descubriendo La Lectura	
		n	mean	n	mean
Writing Vocabulary (Max = 10 min. timed)	Fall	3870	3.46	601	2.40
	Spring	4639	49.08	728	43.13
Dictation (Max = 37)	Fall	3869	4.54	602	3.55
	Spring	4641	34.77	728	37.38
Text Reading Level	Fall	3670	0.49	600	0.31
	Spring	4644	14.38	733	14.79

La Lectura children on measures of writing vocabulary, dictation, and text reading. All children who completed the program showed gains, and scores from both Reading Recovery and DLL were found to be comparable.

A goal of Reading Recovery is to help children build self-extending systems that allow them to continue to learn without extra help. Children who enter the program early in the first grade year are likely to be released midyear and are expected to continue to make progress through participation in regular classroom instruction alone. The extent to which this goal is reached is indicated by assessing the progress made from midyear to end-of-year by the group of children who are discontinued during the year. Discontinued children (Table 3) entered the program with an average text reading level score of .50, exited the program with a 11.44 score, and ended the year with an average reading level of 16.27. Descubriendo La Lectura children entered the program with an average text reading level score of .34, exited the program with a 11.99 score, and ended the year with an average reading level of 18.38. To put this into perspective, they entered as nonreaders, discontinued at a level considered to be the end of first grade, and at

the end of first grade reached a level equivalent to second grade. This continued growth was achieved with no additional tutoring or special assistance.

A review of the data after the first five years (1991-1996) of California implementation indicated that more than 76 percent of the children served by Reading Recovery were successfully discontinued from the program. Even though each year a large number of the participating teachers were still in training, these data are a clear demonstration of the continued potential the program has to help California's at-risk students become successful readers in their first year of school.

Reading Recovery students, all of whom begin first grade at the bottom of their class, make considerable progress as a result of the program, especially when combined with effective classroom instruction. Even students who enter the program and are not discontinued due to lack of time in the program make considerable progress in learning to read and write.

The first end-of-year study on Reading Recovery in the United States (Pinnell, DeFord, & Lyons,

Table 3. Progress of Reading Recovery and Descubriendo La Lectura Children Discontinued Prior to April 1

	Reading Recovery			Descubriendo La Lectura		
	Fall <i>n</i> = 1865	Exit <i>n</i> = 1934	Spring <i>n</i> = 1803	Fall <i>n</i> = 251	Exit <i>n</i> = 269	Spring <i>n</i> = 241
Writing Vocabulary	3.66	44.35	51.33	2.34	39.85	45.86
Dictation	5.07	34.45	35.07	3.62	37.25	37.77
Text Reading	0.50	11.44	16.27	0.34	11.99	18.38

1988) indicated that 73.5 percent of the 136 randomly assigned Reading Recovery students were discontinued from the program. Over 90 percent of the discontinued students were performing at or above average on four measures of reading ability at the end of first grade, and more than 70 percent were performing at or above average on three other measures of assessment. At the end of the year, the gain score of the Reading Recovery students on a nationally normed standardized test, *California Test of Basic Skills* (CTBS), was 8.6 compared to a score of 2.4 earned by a similar group of randomly assigned first graders who had received another form of compensatory education.

Students maintained progress in second, third, and fourth grades.

Researchers at Texas Woman's University found that the 1789 Reading Recovery students who successfully completed the program performed at an average or better level on three measures of reading and writing ability at the end of their first grade year (Askew, Frasier, & Griffin, 1993). Individual Reading Recovery sites documented similar results in their annual reports. The Halifax, Canada (Talwar & Hill, 1993) site reported that in the spring of 1990 their discontinued Reading Recovery students read an average text level of 15, compared with an average first grade band of 11-19. At the end of the school year in 1991, the discontinued Reading Recovery first graders were reading an average text level of 16, compared to an average band of 11-21, and in 1992, discontinued Reading Recovery students read at an average level of 16, compared to an average band of 15-22.

In 1995-96 (National Diffusion Network, 1996), 83 percent (59,266) of all the children in the United States who had received a complete Reading Recovery program were discontinued. When compared to a random sample of classmates at the end of the year, 86 percent of these students scored at or above the average band range on writing vocabulary, 95 percent on dictation, and 84 percent on text reading.

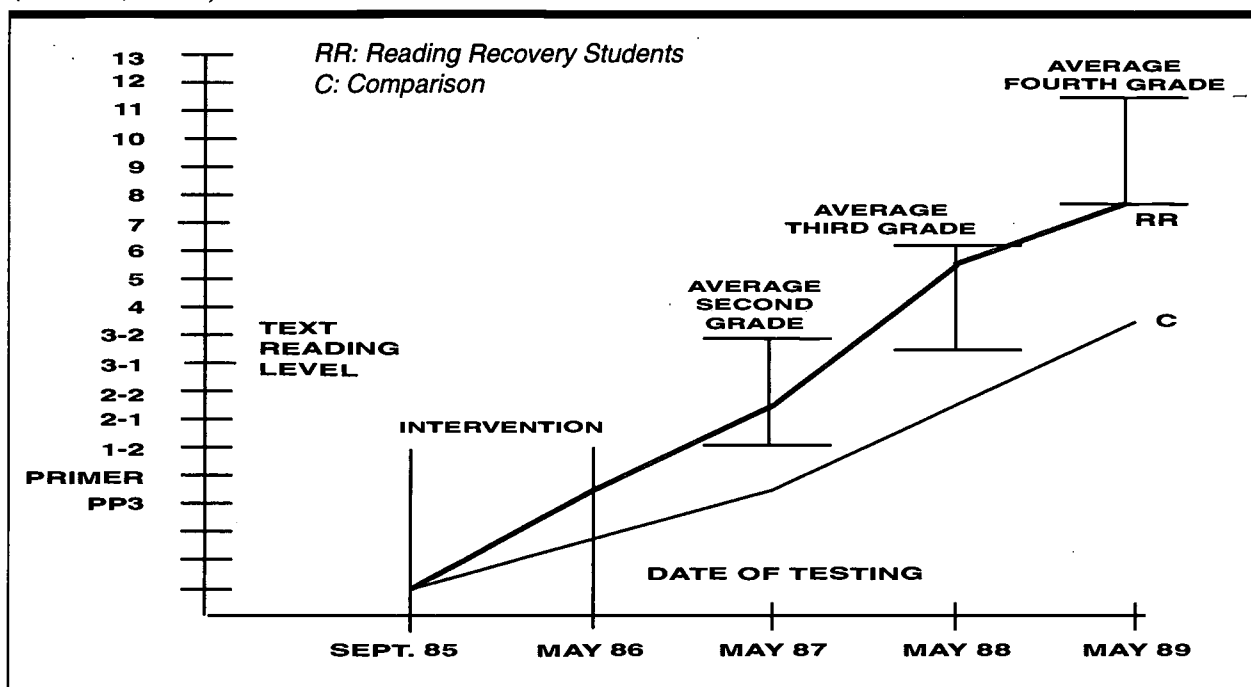
As Reading Recovery has grown, the academic community has shown interest in various effects of the program. Researchers have compared Reading Recovery with other intervention programs, evaluated its cost-effectiveness, and studied its long-term effects on children. Others have explored such areas as the success of the teacher training component and the impact of the program on learning disabled students. This research, combined with the data collected each year on children who receive the program, provides answers to some of the most commonly asked questions about Reading Recovery. No other early intervention program has provided comparable data or significant, extensive studies of the actual application in districts over time.

Are the gains made in Reading Recovery sustained over time?

Research indicates that Reading Recovery students not only become average or better readers in first grade, they develop a *self-extending* learning system, which enables them to continue learning in the regular class setting without further intervention.

A study of Ohio school children (Table 4) showed that students served in Reading Recovery maintained progress in second, third, and fourth grades (Pinnell, 1989). Fourth grade Reading

Table 4. Follow-Up Study: Gains Made by Students After Completing Reading Recovery
(Pinnell, 1989)



Recovery students demonstrated that they could accurately read text at the sixth-grade level or above.

Additionally, these children proved to be excellent spellers, producing spellings on a fifth grade level spelling test closer to conventional than their randomly selected peers.

In the Long Beach Unified School District, beginning third grade achievement scores on the Individual Test of Academic Skills were compared for Reading Recovery children who successfully completed the program and the grade cohort. On average, Reading Recovery children scored in the average stanine on overall language and text reading. The data set for this large, urban district included children from black (58 percent), Hispanic (19 percent), white (13 percent), Pacific Islander (5 percent), Asian (5 percent), and American Indian (1 percent) ethnic backgrounds (Giese, 1995).

Smith-Burke, Jaggar, and Ashdown (1993) tested 174 second grade children who had successfully completed Reading Recovery as first graders in 1990-91. Their performance on several measures was compared to that of a grade level, random sample of 177 children. The following results highlight the strong residual effects of the program:

- Eighty-nine percent of the Reading Recovery children scored within or above the average band on text reading compared to 80 percent of the random sample, and 23 percent of the Reading Recovery children scored above the average band.
- Ninety-six percent of the Reading Recovery children scored at grade two or above, compared to 89 percent of the random sample.
- At the end of second grade, the average Reading Recovery child was able to read passages roughly equivalent to fifth grade basal

reading material with at least 90 percent accuracy.

Allen, Dorn, and Paynter (1995) followed Arkansas children who completed the Reading Recovery program and found text reading levels in the average band in first, second, and third grades. Scores of 25 for grade two and 30 for grade three were in the high average range (Table 5).

reading teachers; (3) a small-group intervention taught by trained Reading Recovery teachers; and (4) a control group, which received a standard federally funded remediation program.

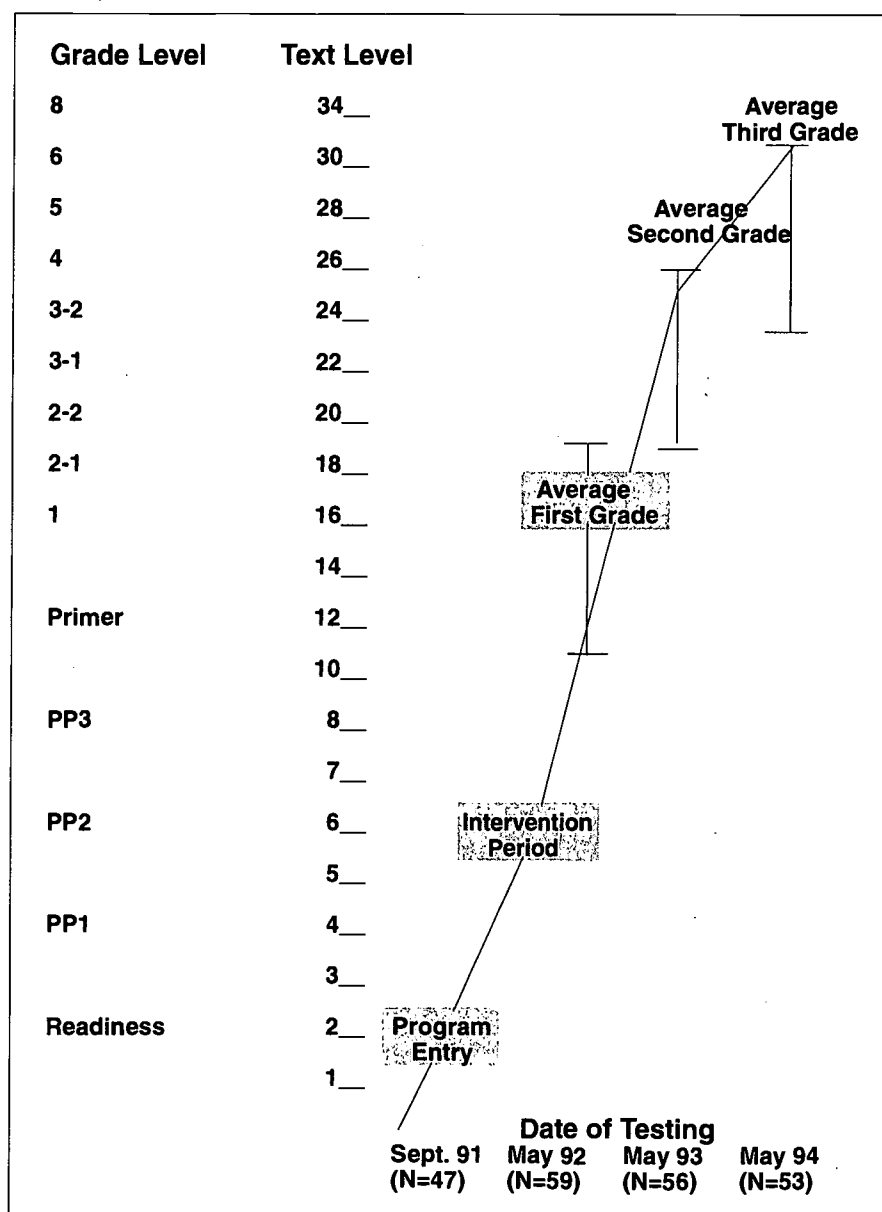
The final report concluded that Reading Recovery children performed significantly better than children from an equivalent control group

Table 5. Arkansas Follow-up Study (Allen, Dorn, & Paynter, 1995)

How does Reading Recovery compare to other early intervention programs?

Large scale and local investigations demonstrate that Reading Recovery is a particularly effective method to improve the reading acquisition of at-risk children.

A study by Pinnell, Lyons, DeFord, Bryk, and Seltzer (1994) compared Reading Recovery with four other types of early intervention: (1) an individual tutorial program similar to Reading Recovery, but taught by a teacher with an abbreviated training program; (2) Direct Instructional Skills Plan (Cooter & Reutzel, 1987), an individual tutorial taught without Reading Recovery by experienced



and the three other intervention programs. Reading Recovery was the only group that scored better on all tests, showing long-term improvements in reading. At the end of 70 days of instruction, Reading Recovery children were reading five levels ahead of children who received regular remedial reading lessons. Even though the control group continued to receive lessons for the rest of the year, Reading Recovery children were still three reading levels above the remedial group average when all children were tested the following fall.

How does Descubriendo La Lectura compare to Reading Recovery?

Escamilla (1994) reported that Descubriendo La Lectura students scored higher than comparison students on end-of-year measures, that the performance of DLL students improved at a faster rate than their at-risk peers who did not receive DLL, and that DLL students made significantly greater gains than both their average-achieving classmates and the comparison group based on results of the *Woodcock Reading Mastery Test*, the *Metropolitan Achievement Test*, a spelling assessment, and a

miscue analysis. Descubriendo La Lectura students not only caught up with their average peers, but surpassed them at statistically significant levels.

Reading Recovery . . . prevents the unnecessary placement of at-risk children in special education.

In a Reading Recovery program comparison among English only speakers, DLL, and English language learners, of the 5,273 children, a total of 76 percent of the students in all the programs were discontinued with a mean of 66 lessons delivered (Kelly, Gómez-Valdez, Neal, & Klein, 1995) (see Table 6). These comparable results suggest that Reading Recovery delivered in English can be an effective early intervention for English language learners when instructional support is unavailable in the first language.

Is Reading Recovery cost-effective?

Evidence indicates that Reading Recovery can reduce costs associated with at-risk students by

Table 6. Reading Recovery Program Comparison (Kelly, Gómez-Valdez, Neal, & Klein, 1995)

	n	Percent Discontinued	Mean Number of Lessons Delivered
English Only Speakers	3621	74%	62.76
Descubriendo La Lectura	243	78%	65.34
English Language Learners	1409	75%	66.00
TOTAL	5273	76%	

lowering retention rates and thereby reducing the need for remediation and special education referrals.

Dyer (1992) found that while Reading Recovery requires an initial and ongoing investment, its implementation is educationally sound and reduces the necessity of more commonly used means of intervention. The study concluded that school districts implementing the program will realize significant long-term cost savings through reductions in grade retentions, remedial Title 1 services, and special education placements—savings that can more than offset the short-term costs of implementing and operating the program.

In an analysis of program costs similar to the one reported by Dyer, Swartz (1992) developed a comparison of expenditures for remedial programs and Reading Recovery in the State of California (Table 7). Using average student caseloads and average costs per student provided by the California Department of Education and student service configurations and length-of-stay

reported by practitioners, Reading Recovery costs were found to be half of those for Title 1 and retention, and a quarter of those for special education placement. The cost figures and estimates of various program elements were purposefully conservative to ensure that the important focus on program effectiveness was not distracted by inflated cost-effectiveness claims.

What is the effect of Reading Recovery on grade retention and special education placement?

Researchers have also examined Reading Recovery's ability to reduce first grade retentions, the need for further remediation, and the number of students classified as learning disabled, with positive results.

Lyons, Pinnell, and DeFord (1993) documented the experience of a district that reduced its first grade retention rate significantly in the five years following the implementation of Reading Recovery, which resulted in considerable savings.

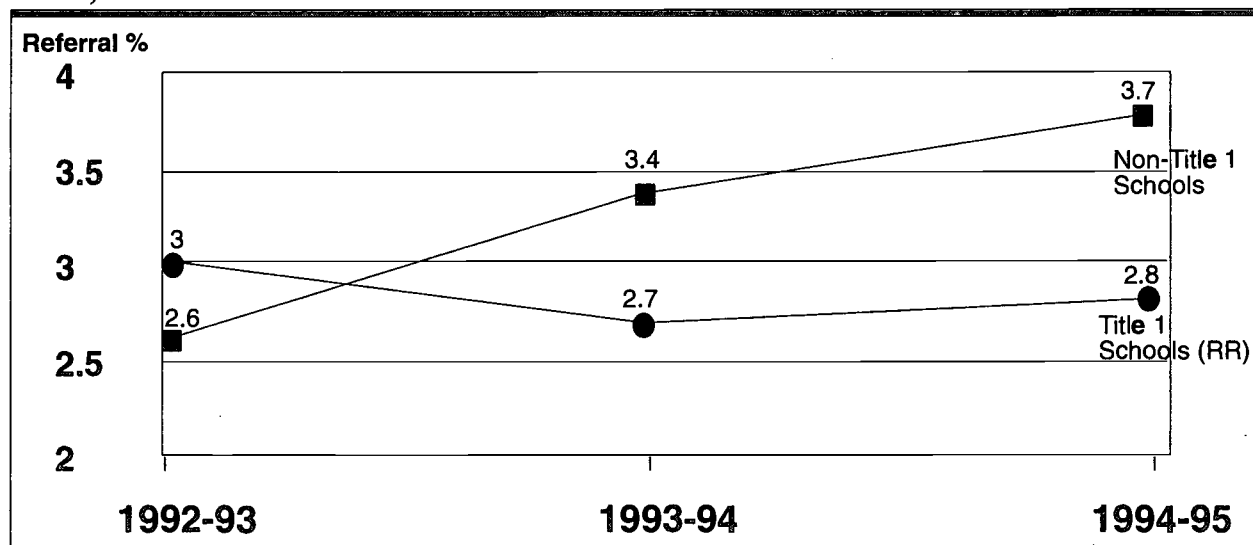
Table 7. Cost Comparison of Selected Intervention Programs in California (Swartz, 1992)

Program	Students Served Per Day	Minutes Per Day	Length of Stay in Program	Total Cost Per Student
Title 1	40	30	3-5 years	\$ 4552
Special Education (RSP)	28	90-120	5-7 years	\$ 9104
Retention	n/a	n/a	1 year	\$ 4598
Reading Recovery	4	30	16 weeks	\$ 2276

Another study found that the first grade retention rate in a school district that had implemented Reading Recovery dropped from 4.3 percent in the three years before implementation to 2.9 percent four years after implementation. It also showed that the district reduced its enrollment in learning disabilities classrooms at the end of first grade from 1.8 percent of the first grade in the three years before full implementation to .64 percent three years after implementation (Lyons & Beaver, 1994).

In a California study (Colton Joint Unified School District, 1996), the number of children referred to special education was reduced in Title 1 schools with Reading Recovery when compared to non-Title 1 schools not using Reading Recovery (see Table 8). Reading Recovery is not assumed to ameliorate a learning disability, rather Reading Recovery is an early intervention that prevents the unnecessary placement of at-risk children in special education (Swartz, 1995).

Table 8. Referrals to Special Education in Title 1 Schools with Reading Recovery vs. Non-Title 1 Schools not Using Reading Recovery (Colton Joint Unified School District, 1996)



The Reading Recovery Lesson

Reading Recovery teachers use a battery of six measures called the Observation Survey to select the lowest achieving children in their classrooms (see Figure 1). In addition to regular classroom reading instruction, these children receive daily Reading Recovery lessons.

The first two weeks of each child's program are designed to develop the student's strengths. This period, referred to as *roaming around the known*, is comprised of a variety of literature-based activities that build the child's confidence and establish a rapport between teacher and child. The teacher uses this time to learn about the child's ability and build a foundation for the individualized lessons that will follow.

Each lesson includes seven components:

- Rereading familiar books,
- Taking a running record,
- Letter identification and word making and breaking,
- Writing a story,
- Rearranging a cutup story,
- Introducing a new book, and
- Attempting a new book.

During these reading and writing activities, the teacher provides just enough support to help the child develop the effective strategies that independent readers use. This teacher assistance supports the process through which children learn to predict, confirm, and understand what they read. Writing opportunities are essential for developing strategies for hearing sounds in words, representing messages, and for monitoring and checking their own reading and writing.

Figure 1.

Selecting and Evaluating Reading Recovery Children

At the beginning of each academic year, children at risk of reading failure are selected for Reading Recovery using classroom teacher judgement and results from the Observation Survey. Looking across measures, teachers select children who are the lowest achievers. The Observation Survey is also used to evaluate children who receive the program. The following six measures comprise this diagnostic tool:

- 1) **Letter Identification:** Children are asked to identify 54 different characters, including upper and lowercase letters and conventional print for "a" and "g."
- 2) **Word Test:** Children are asked to read a list of 20 words drawn from the words used most frequently in early reading material.
- 3) **Concepts about Print:** Children are asked to perform a variety of tasks during a book reading. These tasks, presented in a standard situation, check on significant concepts about printed language, such as directionality and concept of word.
- 4) **Writing Vocabulary:** Within a 10-minute period, children are asked to write all the words they know. The score on this test is the number of words spelled accurately.
- 5) **Dictation Test:** Testers read a sentence to the children who write the words indicating their ability to analyze the word for sounds.
- 6) **Text Reading Level:** Measures of text reading level are obtained by constructing a gradient of text difficulty, then testing for the highest level read with accuracy of 90 percent or better. Levels are drawn from a basal reading system that is not part of Reading Recovery instruction.

The framework of a Reading Recovery lesson remains fairly consistent from child to child. However, each lesson is unique. The child and teacher have their own interactions which determine the direction each lesson may take. The teacher constantly observes the child's reactions and questions. All will vary based upon the child's responses. Books to be used in the lesson are chosen specifically with each child in mind. Books are selected from a variety of little books from numerous publishers for their appropriateness of natural language, meaning, and level of difficulty.

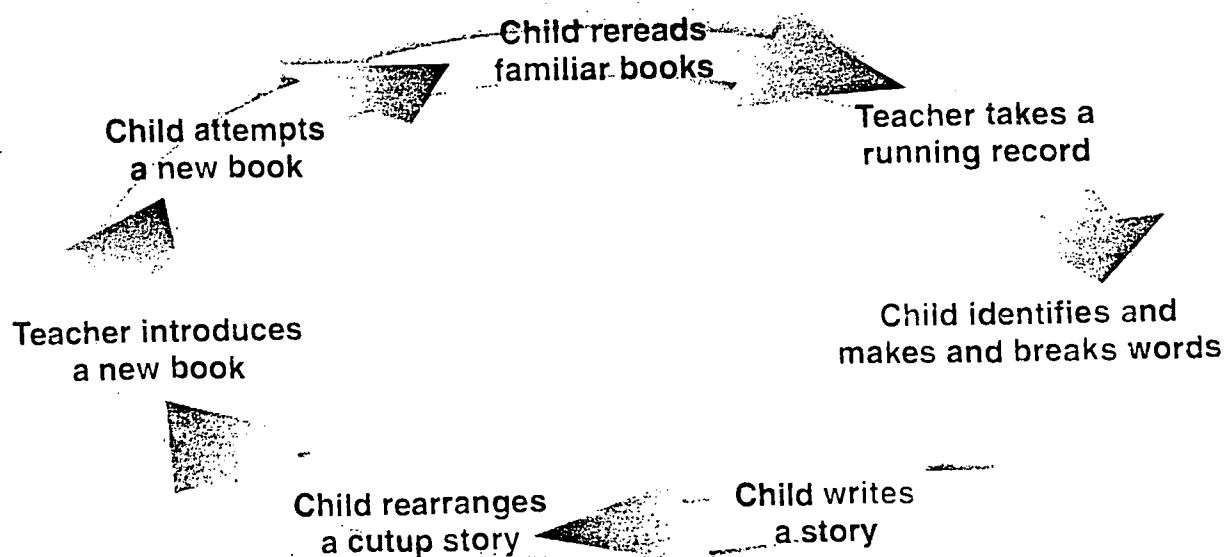
At the beginning of each lesson the child reads familiar books. These books were introduced in earlier lessons and have been placed in a group specifically for the child to read with ease, confidence, and fluency. Some problem-solving may also occur in this part of the lesson, although the primary focus is to ensure student success

with a minimum of teacher assistance. After the familiar book, the child reads a book that was read once the day before. The teacher keeps a detailed running record of the child's behavior for use in selecting the appropriate teaching strategy.

Following the running record, the teacher spends a minute or two helping the child extend his or her letter knowledge and supporting the child in learning how words work by making and breaking one or two words using magnetic letters.

Next the child writes a story. This allows the child the opportunity to observe the connectedness of reading and writing. The child writes independently and is assisted by the teacher in areas where assistance is needed. The teacher's involvement will decline as the child becomes more independent over time. A sentence written

FRAMEWORK OF LESSONS



by the child is cut up and the child reassembles it using visual information and language structure.

Each day the teacher selects a new book to introduce to the child at the end of each lesson. The child is provided with as much introduction as necessary for the present level of independence. Supported by this introduction, the child reads the text as independently as possible with questions and assistance from the teacher. This book is read the next day independently while the teacher takes a running record of everything the child says and does during the reading. The teacher's role is that of neutral observer in this situation. After the reading, the child and teacher will discuss the strategies the child used to solve problems and detect errors.

Characteristics of Reading Recovery Lessons

Individualized Instruction

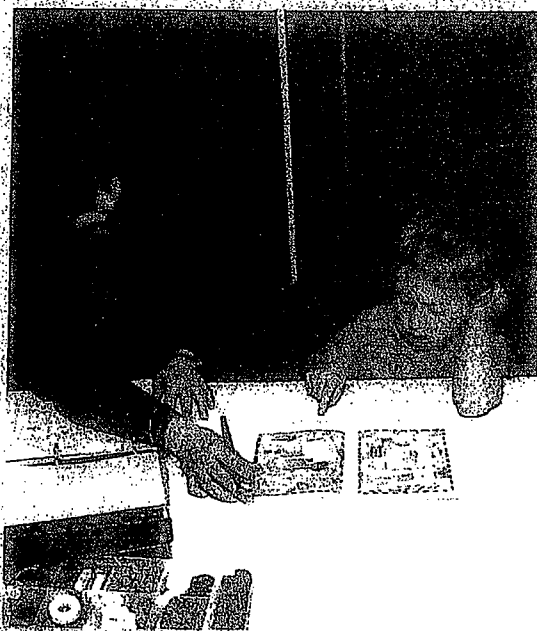
Many early literacy programs try to move children along an artificial literacy continuum by teaching skills that somehow *add up* to good reading and writing. In contrast, Reading Recovery teachers carefully observe each student "as a reader and writer, with particular attention to what the child can do within the processes of reading and writing" (Clay, 1993, p. 7).

By working from a knowledge base unique to each student, Reading Recovery teachers move well beyond the traditional *skill and drill* approach associated with remedial reading programs. Each lesson is different from the others. Books are selected specifically for each child based upon individual strengths or needs. Each child responds in a unique way and the teacher then adjusts the lesson to meet those needs. The flow of the lesson changes in response to the child.

Thirty Minutes of Reading Recovery . . .

Rereading Familiar Books

The child is able to read an entire book exhibiting behaviors indicative of good readers. The teacher supports those behaviors through appropriate and well chosen questions or prompts.



Teacher Takes a Running Record

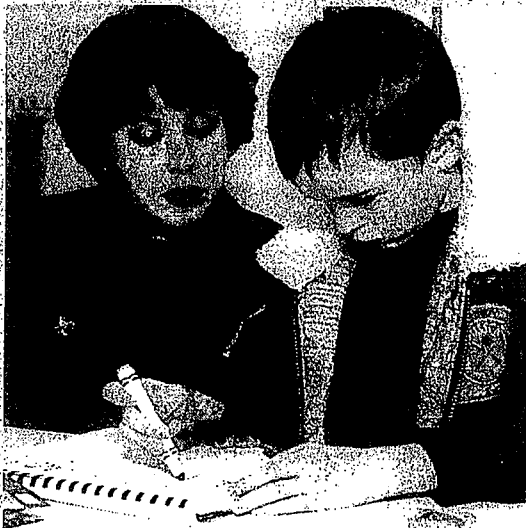
The child reads the new book from the previous lesson independently while the teacher notes reading behaviors. The teacher records important information to be used in making instructional decisions, selecting teaching points to be used after the reading.

Letter Identification and Word Making and Breaking

Following the running record, the teacher spends a minute or two helping the child extend his letter knowledge and supporting the child in learning how words work by making and breaking one or two words using magnetic letters.

Writing a Story

The child composes a story about a book read or a personal experience. Through joint problem-solving, the child and teacher work together to write the story. The child writes as independently as possible.



Rearrange Cutup Story

After writing the story, one of the sentences is written on a sentence strip and cut up. The child uses knowledge of the sentence to search and monitor for cues while reassembling the story.

New Book Introduced and Attempted

The teacher introduces a new book, providing a framework for the meaning and language structures the child will meet. This book should offer a little more challenge than previous books read in the lesson, but be well within the child's reach.

Working with Books and Stories

Reading Recovery students typically work with an entire book or a complete story, rather than with unconnected sentences or word lists. By reading and writing continuous texts, children learn to use many different aspects of print—including letters, words, sentences, and pictures—to understand complete stories just as successful readers do.

Accelerated Learning

The goal of Reading Recovery is accelerated learning. Children are expected to make faster than average progress so that they can catch up with other children in the class. The majority of Reading Recovery children typically reach an average reading level after 12-20 weeks of daily instruction. During this period, they continue to work in the regular classroom for all but 30 minutes each day.

Work from Strengths

Accelerated learning is possible because Reading Recovery teachers base their instruction on careful observation of what each child already knows about reading and writing. This approach creates efficiency, as the individualized instruction that follows “will work on these strengths and not waste time teaching anything already known” (Clay, 1993, p. 3).

Independent Learning

The goal of Reading Recovery is not just to improve the reading and writing ability of children, but to help them learn how to continue improving on their own, so that later remediation is unnecessary. With the assistance of their Reading Recovery teacher, children learn the strategies that good readers use. Reading Recovery instruction continues until the child has a self-extending system for literacy learning.

Program Implementation

It takes a school district two years to develop a Reading Recovery site: one year to have a qualified member of its staff trained as a teacher leader at a Regional Training Center and during the second year establish a training site and begin training teachers.

The Application Process

To become an approved training site, a school district (or consortium of districts) begins by applying to one of the California Regional Training Centers to have a qualified member of its teaching staff trained as a teacher leader. As part of the application process, prospective sites must secure financial support within the district and obtain the approval of the district superintendent.

The applying district also selects an administrator in the district to assume administrative responsibilities for Reading Recovery. This site coordinator oversees the preparation of the facility, manages the budget, negotiates contracts, and acts as administrative liaison with the Reading Recovery network.

The Training Year

Applicants are selected for the program in the spring, and the yearlong residency program begins the following fall. The teacher leader training is a graduate course taken for credit at one of the Regional Training Centers. The program for teacher leaders includes five components:

1. A graduate-level curriculum consisting of a clinical practicum, a seminar in theory and current research, and supervised fieldwork;
2. The daily teaching of four Reading Recovery students;
3. Field requirements, including assisting with the training of Reading Recovery teachers, conducting colleague visits to observe other class members teaching a Reading Recovery lesson, and visiting other Reading Recovery sites;
4. Preparation for implementing Reading Recovery in their district; and
5. Attendance at a number of professional development activities including the West Coast Reading Recovery Institute.

During the training year, teacher leaders work with their site coordinators to prepare the site for its first year of operation. They inform appropriate groups about the program, prepare the space where the teacher training classes will be held, order materials for teacher training, and assist in the selection of appropriate teachers for the training class.

Implementation Year

Following their training year, teacher leaders and site coordinators work together to maintain the site. Teacher leaders train new teachers, collect data on children served, and prepare an annual site report. They also participate in a variety of continuing contact events and activities, including national conferences and training seminars, in order to further their own professional development. In subsequent years, teacher leaders visit previously trained teachers and conduct continuing contact sessions.

Funding Sources

Special Education (RSP-Resource Specialist Program)	Title I	Miller-Unruh (Primary Grades Reading)
School Improvement Program	Mentor Teacher	Itinerant Language, Speech, and Hearing
Bilingual Education	Even Start	Migrant Education
SB 1274 (School Restructuring)	Reading Specialist	Integration Consent Decree
Goals 2000	General Fund	Foundation Grants

Teacher Training at Reading Recovery Sites

To implement Reading Recovery at the classroom level in districts where the program has been adopted, qualified teachers enroll in a yearlong academic course taught by a certified teacher leader. This course is offered for graduate credit through one of the Regional Training Centers. Through interactive clinical experiences and theoretical study guided by a teacher leader, teachers learn how to implement all components of a Reading Recovery lesson and to select teaching procedures appropriate for individual students.

Teachers-in-training continue to work full-time in their school districts as they receive instruction in Reading Recovery procedures. The most common arrangement during the training year and subsequent years is for the teacher to spend half a day teaching Reading Recovery students and the second half in other teaching duties.

Implementation Models

Reading Recovery has been implemented in California using a wide variety of models. Reading Recovery teachers are required to spend half a day (two and one-half hours minimum) working one-to-one with children (usually four). The remainder of the day is assigned to various other teaching and support functions. Districts have reported using the following configurations for assignments of teachers:

- Title I, Miller-Unruh, Reading Specialists, or Special Education Resource Specialist Program (RSP) teachers spend half of their day teaching Reading Recovery and the other half working with individuals or small groups using other instructional strategies.
- Two teachers share a first grade with the same alternating model. A specialist and a teacher share a classroom where one teacher teaches the class and the other uses Reading Recovery with individual children and then they switch roles for the second half of the day.

Key Elements of Reading Recovery

- **Reading Recovery is an early intervention program that supports accelerated learning.**
- **Reading Recovery serves the lowest achieving children.**
- **Reading Recovery is effective with diverse populations.**
- **Children develop a self-extending system of learning to read and write.**
- **Student outcomes are sustained over time.**
- **Reading Recovery teachers serve children as part of their training.**
- **Reading Recovery provides continuous professional support for teachers.**
- **All Reading Recovery teachers, teacher leaders, and trainers work with children daily.**
- **Program success is directly tied to student performance.**
- **Reading Recovery is cost-effective.**
- **Reading Recovery is a not-for-profit program.**

- Kindergarten teachers teach one session and then spend half a day in Reading Recovery.
- Migrant education teachers use Reading Recovery in extended-day sessions.
- Halftime teachers are employed as Reading Recovery teachers.

The Costs of Implementation

The costs of adopting Reading Recovery include those associated with the establishment of a site, as well as ongoing site maintenance. Start-up

expenses include training fee, materials, and expenses for the teacher leader-in-training; the installation of a one-way glass at the new site for teacher training; and a portion of the site coordinator's salary during the training year. Following the training year, new sites provide funding for teacher leader salaries, continuing contact for teacher leaders, site staff support, and training materials. For specific information regarding costs, contact the Regional Training Center in your area.

The Benefits of Implementation

Implementing Reading Recovery requires a substantial commitment on the part of the district. The integrated nature of the instructional programs for children and educators, the use of quantitative data to measure the results of the intervention on all children served, the strong professional development model—these and the other features of the program simultaneously ensure its effectiveness and demand a high level of support from participating individuals and districts. This level of support is justified by the accelerated growth achieved by Reading Recovery program children and the transformation of teachers who become true change agents in their districts.

Key Elements of Reading Recovery

Reading Recovery has a number of key elements that make the program an important opportunity to reform how we teach young children to read and write.

- Reading Recovery is an early intervention program that supports early literacy. Reading Recovery focuses on early intervention, the benefits of which have been paid lip service for years. Spending the money early before problems begin rather than on later remedial programs or even on incarcerating criminals has been talked about but not seen in public schools. Reading Recovery is designed to concentrate resources on first graders as they begin to read.

Reading Recovery also supports accelerated learning. Most of our remedial programs consider themselves successful even when some progress is made. Unfortunately, children making only some progress will always be behind their class. Only acceleration can help a child catch up to the average of his peers and allow participation in the regular class program.

- Reading Recovery serves the lowest achieving children. The lowest achieving children in first grade, without exception, are selected to receive the program. None of the historic reasons used to explain non-achievement (e.g., likely referral to special education, lack of parental support) are used to exclude children from the program.

- Reading Recovery is effective with diverse populations. Data collected on program success from different geographical regions (throughout the United States, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand) and from various groups of children (those with ethnic, language, or economic differences) are comparable. Preliminary data from the more recently developed Descubriendo La Lectura/Reading Recovery in Spanish are also similar to children receiving the English program.

- Children develop a self-extending system of learning to read and write. Children learn the skills to be independent learners who will just need the support of regular classroom instruction rather than remedial programs.

- Student outcomes are sustained over time. Research on students after program completion has demonstrated continued growth in reading and writing without continued Reading Recovery support or other specific interventions.

- Reading Recovery teachers serve children as part of their training. Teachers in the program learn by doing and use the Reading Recovery lesson framework throughout their training year. Students served by these teachers-in-training show comparable progress to those served by more experienced teachers.

- Reading Recovery provides continuous professional support for teachers. The continuing contact for trained teachers is provided as long as the teacher participates in Reading Recovery.

Unlike other teacher education programs which have little contact with students after the training period, Reading Recovery has ongoing inservice opportunities designed to maintain teaching effectiveness.

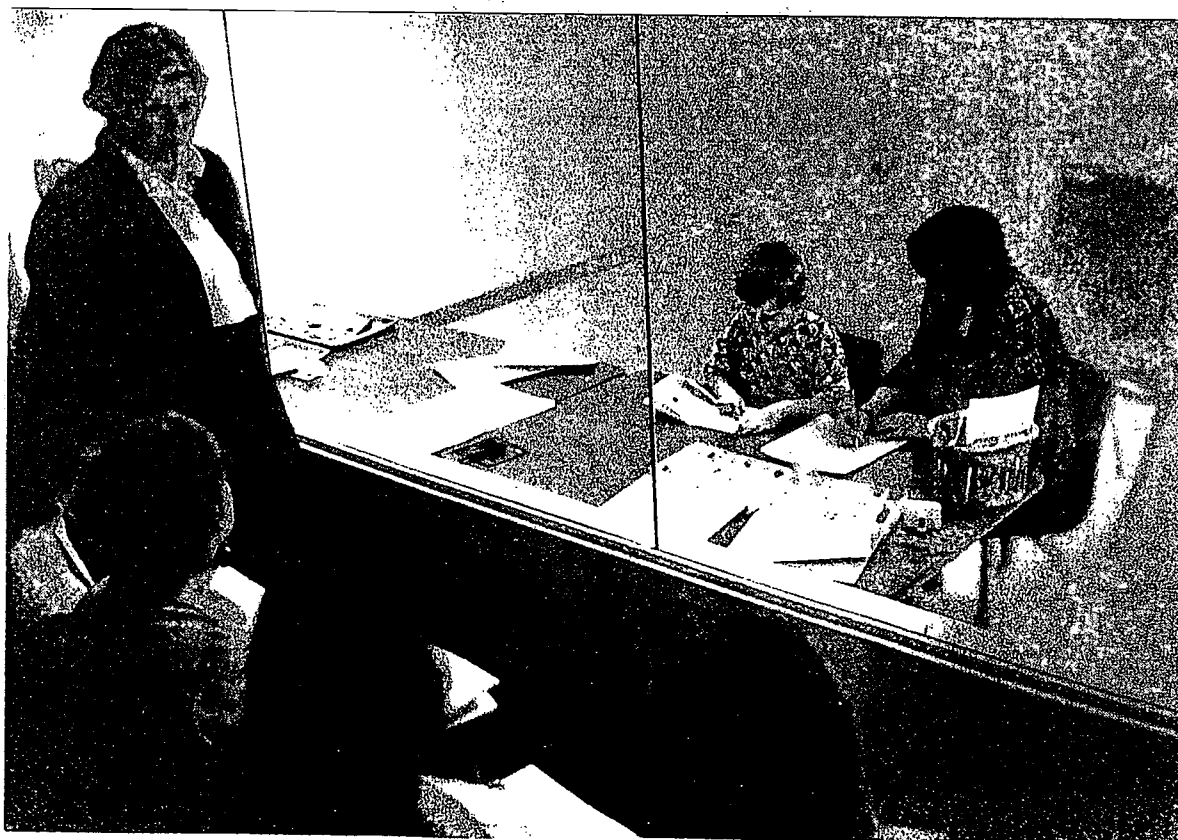
- All Reading Recovery teachers, staff developers, and university professors work with children daily. This ongoing teaching of children

by personnel at all levels is the practice that is generally credited with maintaining the effectiveness of the training. Professors can relate instruction in the university classroom to a recent event rather than something from the distant past. This novel aspect of Reading Recovery deserves serious examination by other teacher trainers.

Behind the Glass

Extensive use is made of a one-way glass for training lessons. Once a week during the training year, two teachers each work with one of their children individually behind a one-way glass while the rest of the teachers-in-training observe from the other side of the glass. Guided by the teacher leader, the teachers engage in an intensive discussion of what they are watching. After the lessons, teachers participate in a critique session.

Use of the one-way glass has been proven to be one of the most powerful components of staff development in Reading Recovery.

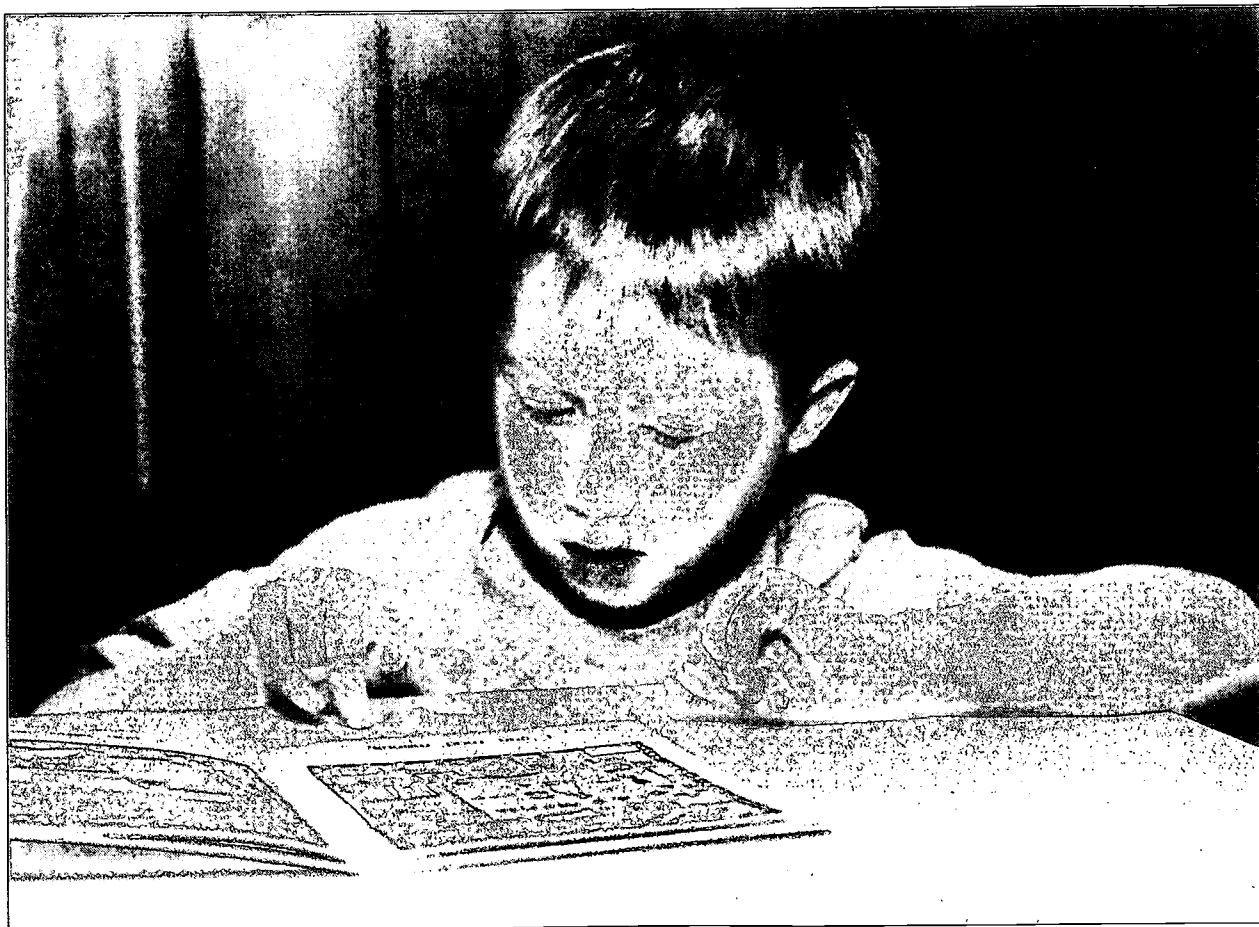


- Program success is directly tied to student performance. And by implication, success as a Reading Recovery teacher is related to student outcomes. Teachers are accountable for the amount of progress in reading and writing made by children in the program.

- Reading Recovery is cost-effective. Though Reading Recovery is a supplemental program, it remains cost-effective because of its short-term nature. Comparable programs (e.g., Title 1, special education) are much more expensive because they are typically long-term. Studies have also found that referrals to special education have decreased for schools with full implementation of Reading Recovery. Reading Recovery has been found to be both less expensive and more effective. Public school

administrators still express concern about the expense of Reading Recovery. The best response is that the problem is a hard one and the solution will be just as hard. Educators have been searching in vain for cheap and easy answers for many years. A less expensive program that serves more children but has limited outcomes (or does not even attempt to measure outcomes) is no bargain.

- Reading Recovery is a not-for-profit program. Unlike a host of other programs offered to the public schools, Reading Recovery has no royalties, sells no materials, and makes no profits. The Reading Recovery name is trademarked only to protect the integrity of the program. This not-for-profit status allows us to promote the program with impunity (Swartz & Klein, 1997)



What California Program Participants Say

The effects of Reading Recovery extend far beyond the children served. In questionnaires administered to parents, administrators, and

classroom teachers, as well as Reading Recovery teachers and students, individual reactions to the program were collected.

Parents:

"Reading Recovery did wonders for my child. He can read. We will always be grateful."

"I am very thankful for this program. My daughter has made wonderful progress. She now picks up any book and starts to read."

"My son used to call himself stupid. Now he is very proud that he can read."

"Gracias por este bueno programa. Este programa es el mejor programa entre la escuela. Mi hijo aprendió leer."

"I really didn't think my child was going to be able to read until Reading Recovery. He is now one of the best in his class."

Teachers:

"Children have increased self-esteem and they have become motivated in reading and their other work."

"I have seen tremendous growth in confidence. They use the Reading Recovery strategies in their independent classroom reading."

"Great program. All schools should have it."

"Children who used to be low readers now read anything they can get their hands on. They have learned the skills of reading and the enjoyment of reading."

"Reading Recovery has saved those students who were discouraged and failing."

Administrators:

"We need to have Reading Recovery in every school in every district in California."

"Our data show that children who have been in Reading Recovery are not retained or placed in special education. That's success!"

"I am truly amazed with the impact on self-esteem and academic progress. Reading Recovery has been one of our best investments."

Regional Training Centers for Teacher Leaders

Reading Recovery in California
California State University, San Bernardino
School of Education
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San Bernardino, CA 92407-2397
(909)880-5646; FAX (909)880-7010
Trainers of Teacher Leaders:
Patricia R. Kelly and Adria F. Klein
Clinical Trainers:
Beverly M. Hoffman and Rebecca E. Shook

Central California Reading Recovery Project
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Department of Literacy and Early Education
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(209)278-0223; FAX (209)278-0404
Trainer of Teacher Leaders:
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Saint Mary's College
School of Education
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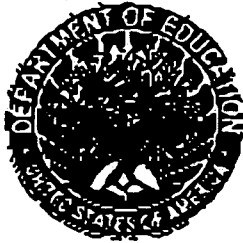
Affiliated Training Site

Reading Recovery in Rural South Texas
South Texas Literacy Foundation
Texas A&M - Kingsville
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Cathy Moore, Project Director
J. Francisco Hidalgo, Site Coordinator
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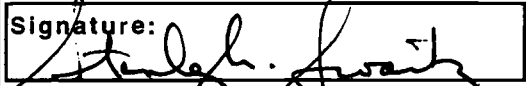
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